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Being an account of life as a cog in the welfare machinery

STUART DYBECK

DONALD D. RANSTEAD **CHILE CON ALLENDE**
JOHN OVERBROOK **TIGHTENING CINCTURES**
JOSEPH A. PAGE **GETTING THE LEAD OUT**
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR, **R**
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NEWS & VIEWS

Reviewing Reactions

Not unexpectedly, my "Vanishing Catholic Press" article [11/5/71] brought a number of reactions from colleagues, some of them scolding, but most of them seconding one or another point of my thesis.

Drawing the widest comment was the regional publication idea, most of my colleagues seeming to believe that it was practical and perhaps even the key to the Catholic press' survival. But if one editor's experience is typical, the idea may be fated.

This editor sought to merge diocesan weeklies of a particular region into a central unit, with "local" news sections for each diocese in the paper. He got nowhere. He found editors concerned they might lose their jobs via merger, and bishops concerned because they would be one more step removed from control of contents. So, although there was agreement that the idea had merit, no workable agreement to carry it out ever developed.

Robert E. Simanski of the Youngstown *Catholic Exponent* reminded that the regional publication idea is actually operative in the Ohio area—has been for many years, in fact. There the *Catholic Universe-Bulletin* of Cleveland acts as parent publication for the Youngstown paper and for the Toledo *Catholic-Chronicle*.

But Ohio's arrangement, however successful, has not commended the regional publication idea elsewhere, and the unnamed editor's experience perhaps clues to why. It may be one of those ideas which is beautiful in theory, but which breaks down on self-interest.

As for the scolding, that came primarily from colleagues who felt that I shortchanged the Catholic magazine press, and specifically *The Critic, U.S. Catholic* and *St. Anthony's Messenger*.

I must confess to fault here, for although my article was intended as overview rather than systematic analysis of the Catholic press, I do remain a creature of my 15 years as a diocesan editor; even after five years at *Commonweal*, I tend to view the Catholic press primarily in terms of its newspapers. Score one for my critics there.

But what raised hackles more were my remarks concerning the talent problem. Not a few commented that it was bumptious on my part to contend that aside from *NCR* and *Commonweal* new talent was not being developed and retained, when there are writers and cartoonists around like those of *The Critic* and *U.S. Catholic*, to name two of the magazines mentioned.

The clarification is valid, but only so far as it pertains to such select publications. There is a distinct talent problem, certainly in the diocesan press, and the problem's existence does not seem in dispute among the generation of writers I had in mind —which is not the generation of most of those who wrote to me.

Robert Simanski, to return to him, said all in commenting: "At age 30, I feel I'm one of the few holdouts from my generation."

Simanski noted the departures of young talent like Bob Keller from the *Delmarva Dialog* of Wilmington and Tom Lorsung of the Baltimore *Catholic Review*, and to the reasons I gave for the drainoff added a few of his own:

Frustration; "I think you touched upon this when you discussed triviality. Talent must be challenged."

Poor pay; "Pay scales, while better than before, have not kept pace with the secular media, and dedication alone doesn't feed a family."

Lack of advancement opportunity; "Catholic newspaper staffs are small, and aggressive journalists who stay in the Catholic press must move from place to place in order to advance themselves."

A lack of professionalism among most of the editors; "Most of the exchange papers I've seen are drab and colorless and have failed to make effective use, if any, of recent technological advances in the printing field. Young journalists, fresh from their schooling, are quick to pick this up."

Simanski finds his work in the Catholic press "challenging," and he intends to stay, not switch. The crisis period as he sees it: five years. The Catholic press has to get on its feet by then and make itself invaluable to its readers —"or we'll all be sitting in the personnel office of the nearest daily paper."

Which is what I was trying to say, only it took me 2,000 words.

Pollution and Politics

Senator Muskie has added another count to the charge that the Nixon Administration is playing loose with the letter of its own environmental laws.

Muskie accuses the White House of not permitting its Environmental Protection Administrator, William D. Ruckelshaus, to carry out statutory duties with respect to the 1970 Clean Air Act.

Specifically, Ruckelshaus is said to have been prevented from promulgating the regulations required by the Act for achieving prescribed air quality standards.

"Instead," Muskie alleges, "the agency is required by the Administration to submit recommendations to a group of unknown, final decision-makers."

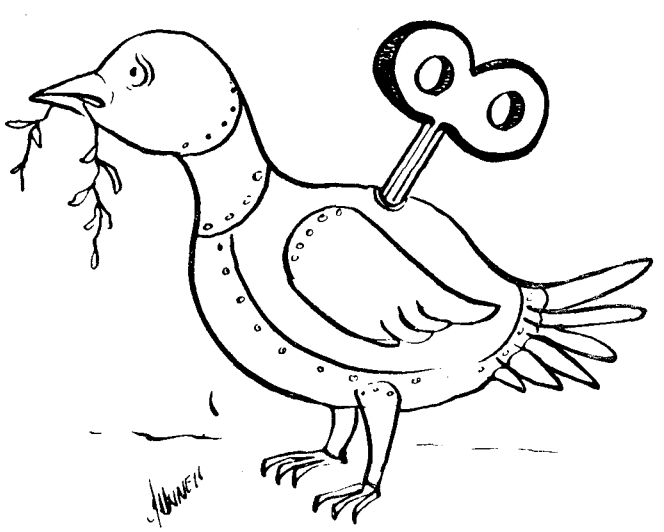
At the time of the Amchitka nuclear test, Supreme Court Justices Douglas, Brennan and Marshall questioned whether the Administration was complying with Sec. 102-(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

End Note

The decision of the U.S. bishops to admit the press to its semi-annual meetings was duly applauded by newsmen, but journalists covering the meeting at which the decision was voted gulped over one argument in favor of changing policy.

Bishop Raymond J. Gallagher of Lafayette, Ind., chairman of the ad hoc committee making the recommendation, said the bishops were losing their credibility with the press and that newspapers "are not inclined to send their first-class journalists to cover bishops' meetings."

Journalists looked around and about the only regular they detected missing was the *New York Times*' Ted Fiske. Covering for the *Times* was Eleanor Blau. JOHN DEEDY



Dunnett, Canada

"Will *nobody* wind me up?"

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CORRESPONDENCE

Vanishing Catholic Press

Orlando, Fla.

To the Editors: Admittedly, the Catholic press has some real problems; but I am not about to put on my mourning suit. John Deedy [Nov. 5] is right when he says we are not really attracting a large amount of young talent; he is right when he talks about dwindling circulation and the need for support from bishops or religious superiors. I think he is wrong if he believes nothing would be lost if the diocesan press were to die a happy death—or even an unhappy one.

What John Deedy is doing, it seems, is measuring the church and its communications needs from a rather narrow point of view, albeit his own. I can think of no better and practical way to get news across than through a newspaper. The idea of buying pages in secular dailies is about as good as last week's coffee.

Mr. Deedy measures competence, it seems, by the criterion of dismissal or resignation. While I have great respect for men such as Bob Hoyt, A. E. P. Wall, John O'Connor and, particularly, Don Quinn, I also have respect for those men who have managed somehow to bend with the wind while remaining firmly rooted in their profession as Catholic journalists.

Granted, we need improvement—self-study, professional approach to promotion, cleaning out editorial hoppers and setting new and fresh priority lists where news is concerned. But it isn't easy. One should not expect it to be easy.

Some of the loss in circulation is due to treatment of the social issues of the day. Gerard E. Sherry, *The Central California Register* (Fresno, Calif.), can speak to that point, as can several other editors.

The diocesan paper, if it is truly of, in and for the community of the church, must reflect the reality of its readers' priorities while giving its

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ON SELECTING BISHOPS

From their meeting in Washington (see page 245) the Catholic bishops made the front page of the *N.Y. Times:* "U.S. Catholic Bishops Call for End to Indochina War"—an event that produced mixed feelings here. Heaven knows the plea for an end to the war "with no further delay" is welcome, and it should be helpful; surely another authoritative call for speedy disengagement in Vietnam, and from such an impeccably anti-Communist source, must have some influence on President Nixon. This is on the positive side. On the negative side, one cannot help but be conscious of how long the statement was in coming—the National Council of Churches, for example, issued a condemnation of the war six years ago.

Welcome as it is, then, the tardiness of the bishops' statement reflects an even more basic problem, the isolation of bishops from the world around them, and this in turn raises fundamental questions about the make-up and method of selection of the U.S. hierarchy. If over the years a majority of the bishops could not be found to condemn the war, one might, while disagreeing, understand—provided only that a respectably sizable number of bishops had spoken up individually, majority or no. In fact, though, the bishops who took a stand against the war were painfully few in number, and this even recently when an increasingly large percentage of the American people were morally revolted by it. On this issue, as on so many other contemporary questions, most of the bishops seemed to live in a world all their own, with little or no contact with the reality around them, and this fact in turn poses serious questions about bishops and the way they have traditionally been chosen in this country.

Anyone who makes such a criticism can predict a certain amount of negative and highly emotional reaction; any proposal for a more democratic process in the church invariably produces such reaction. The first thing that should be emphasized, therefore, is that there is nothing particularly sacrosanct about the way bishops have been chosen in recent times—on the contrary, if one goes to early church practice there is strong evidence for popular participation and broadly based community selection. If Rome is able to consider the process of selecting bishops flexible enough to give a ruler like Franco the last word in the selection of the Spanish hierarchy, surely there is

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no reason why it cannot adjust to a more consultative type of selection in the democratic countries.

Leaving aside the very first days, the selection of bishops in the United States has had two great flaws: it has involved either self-perpetuation by a previous office-holder or designation out of the blue by Rome. Either way, the flaws were great. First of all, the entire process was swaddled in secrecy. Bishops submitted their recommendations to Rome, but just how they arrived at them and exactly what weight they carried was not known, at least outside a small charmed circle. Add to this the fact that for many years the Apostolic Delegate wielded almost unchallenged sway as a bishop-maker—something which further strengthened the notion of the bishop as little more than the local delegate of Rome's power, as well as insuring the selection of still another man cast in the Roman mold; sometimes the most significant thing that could be said about an episocopal designee was that he had been schooled in the shadow of the Vatican. As for the authority of bishops to nominate others for the episcopacy, that power too often simply meant the selection of temperamental and ideological carbon copies of the man doing the choosing. Thus one of the worst effects of the system has been this tendency to perpetuate bishops of the same type, a type which might have been most needed fifty or seventy-five years ago but not today, with major stress on administrative or fiscal ability rather than on desperately needed pastoral imagination. To make matters even worse, various strong men with great influence in Rome carved out their own fiefdoms, and every now and then leading figures like Archbishop Hoban and Cardinal Spellman managed to create their own personal domains clear across the country.

Operating inside such a closed system, it is not surprising if so many bishops are out of touch with current opinion in the church and in the country, as indicated once again by the lateness of the Vietnam war condemnation. Indeed, the surprising thing is the presence of a small but growing number of impressive men who have emerged in the American hierarchy despite the system's flaws. Welcome as this latter development is, however, the time has passed when one could be content to wait for a slow increase in this number. The gap between concerned laymen and most bishops has been large for years, and now the same gap has come into being between many bishops and their own priests. It cannot be emphasized too often that this is a crucial period; the church all over the world is in the midst of what the distinguished historian Msgr. John Tracy Ellis once called the greatest crisis since the Protestant Reformation. In this situation it is imperative that our bishops be in touch with the best of contemporary opinion in the church and in the world, that they be sure enough of themselves to be open to new ideas and new currents, that they welcome men of talent even when these men differ from their own views. Such candidates for the episcopacy are not easily found and reform will not come overnight, but certain definite steps can and should be taken now to broaden the selection process and make their emergence more likely. A few bishops have recently begun to solicit suggestions for nominations to the episcopacy, which is good, but so far such procedure is largely unstructured and unofficial—it needs to be shaped and institutionalized. An immediate step that should be taken, in our view, is the official adoption of the provisional plan for choosing bishops recently put forward by the Canon Law Society of America. The plan is not perfect, as its framers admit; however, it does provide for participation by priests, religious and laymen in the process of selecting a bishop, utilizing structures created by Vatican II—parish councils, priests' senates and diocesan pastoral councils. As such, it is described as a "limited first step" toward providing wide participation, divergent points of view and healthy dialogue. This is precisely what is needed at this point, and there is no theological or historical reason why such broad participation should not be achieved. Certainly for Catholics in the United States there should be a strong interest in seeing the church here take the lead in achieving a more effective and broadly based method of selecting bishops. The church has always taken something from the various cultures in which it existed—in fact, the complaint might reasonably be made that it took too much from feudal society and clung to what it took for too long. Today the time is long overdue for all to learn that democratic processes can also make a valuable contribution to the ongoing life of the church.

CHILE & DEMOCRACY

The report from Chile in this issue provides in many respects a different view of events there than that reflected in American news reports. The difference is not merely in the answers provided but also in the questions asked. Mr. Ranstead can set developments in Chile in

COMING

MARY DALY writes about abortion and a society characterized by a sexual caste system:

"It is less than realistic to ignore the evidence suggesting that within Roman Catholicism the 'official' opposition to the repeal of anti-abortion laws is profoundly interconnected—on the level of motivations, basic assumptions, and style of argumentation—with positions on other issues. Such interconnected issues include birth control, divorce, the subordination of women in marriage and in religious life, and the exclusion of women from the ranks of the clergy."

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the full context of the country's tradition and political life, rich, like our own, in issues of personality and patronage as well as principle. His view is a healthy corrective to a tendency in the U.S. press to frame Chilean events simply in terms of a constant struggle between forces supporting freedom and forces opposing it. The problem with such coverage is not that it is tendentious —what we have seen has not yet limited itself to a good-guys/bad-guys filmscript—but that it tends to inflate any incident open to interpretation as an erosion of freedom and, in fact, to neglect the other factors of normal political jockeying which in Chile, as in the U.S., go into the making of any conflict.

The question of the future of freedom in Chile, however, is not a minor matter. It is not a minor matter, after all, in the United States; and such incidents as the Mayday arrests in Washington, the government's effort to prevent publication of the Pentagon Papers, and the recent White House instigation of an FBI investigation of CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr are deeply disturbing, even though they may not presage the imminent disappearance of the Bill of Rights. By the same token, concern over certain actions of the Chilean government —its criminal prosecution of the Christian Democratic rector of the University, its announced plan to submit a proposal for a unicameral legislature to a plebiscite if Chile's Congress rejects it—do not seem misplaced.

President Allende of Chile obviously desires to make his socialist "revolution" irreversible. He intends to do so, even, it should be pointed out, in the instances of the two worrisome measures mentioned above, through constitutional means. That he should succeed, that for practical purposes the opposition in Chile should have to operate largely within a socialist framework just as the opposition in the U.S. has had to operate largely within a capitalist one, does not seem to be in itself a threat to democracy as we know it. What is more, the history of peaceful and legal "revolutions" which did not exhaust their constitutional opportunities to establish a sympathetic base in the judiciary and bureaucracy—e.g., Weimar Germany—has not been very happy.

But Chile's internal struggle is likely to sharpen in the months and years ahead, due to economic pressures, a rising level of demands and a sizable opposition which does not appear to be particularly constructive. It would be best to enter that struggle with civil liberties firmly intact. To establish a genuinely socialist society with a vigorous opposition would be, after all, an accomplishment of historic importance, next to which the nationalization of industries is an everyday affair. It would confound the pessimistic predictions of authoritarians on both Right and Left. It will also be very difficult. Luckily the Chileans are as well prepared as anyone to undertake the task.

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THE BISHOPS' MEETING

TIGHTENING THEIR CINCTURES

The fall meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops was not a complete waste of time. The bishops passed a resolution calling for peace and reconstruction in Southeast Asia—shorter and less hard-hitting in its final form than it had been in earlier drafts but, nonetheless, a statement that truly reflects some of the Christian concern raised by the war.

The resolution finally approved left out a passage calling for a unilateral cease-fire, except in self-defense, by all American forces. But it did look beyond the end of the war to such problems as repairing the damage in Southeast Asia and rehabilitation of veterans, including those who have become drug addicts. Most significant and moving of all, perhaps, was the appeal for reconciliation among Americans whom the war has bitterly divided and for amnesty to those who have broken the law or left the country to stay out of a war they cannot believe in.

It also asked for a reexamination of the whole concept and process of war in our time. Clearly, many of the bishops no longer feel that the war can be justified. This probably will not affect the long-range policies of the government, but it may lead to a new orientation of the Catholic church in this country.

The event most feared by Catholic liberals took place smoothly. Cardinal Krol was elected to the Conference presidency on the second ballot without any immediately perceptible shaking of the walls or falling in of the ceiling. The cardinal said that he has no special plans or programs, that he approves of the reorganization which has taken place in the NCCB and the U.S. Catholic Conference, and that he does not intend to reverse the work of his predecessor, Cardinal John Dearden. It is doubtful that he could do much in this direction even if he wanted to. The NCCB has, in fact, become a collegial organization. The president's role is to search for a consensus among its members, not to impose any kind of autocracy.

But the retrenchments that Cardinal Krol is unwilling and unable to impose seem to be coming anyway. They are based on something more compelling and permanent than a president's term in office: the chronic budget problem faced by the bishops' agencies during the past five years.

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In its issue of November 5, *Commonweal* asked whether the U.S. Catholic Conference is planning to close its Office for UN Affairs. The reply—available now since the 1972 USCC budget has been approved by the bishops and made public—is an unequivocal "maybe."

Figures don't lie, perhaps, but they can confuse. The figures on the Office for UN Affairs are these, as presented in the 1972 budget: approved for 1971: $79,857; proposed for 1972: $82,772; approved for 1972: $48,748.

Does this mean that the UN Office will be gradually phased out? Or that it will be merged into a national World Justice and Peace office? Or that it will simply have to limp along on a drastically shrunken budget in an inflating economy? Time will tell; the bishops didn't —at least not during this meeing.

Even with its reduced appropriation, the Office for UN Affairs is $48,748 more fortunate than the National Office for Black Catholics, which received no appropriation this year—having been warned last year that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops is "not a funding organization." A group of bishops, headed by Bishop Peter Gerety of Portland, Me., made a vigorous attempt to reverse last year's decision and get some money for NOBC into the budget. The most they could obtain was an informal agreement that the bishops would try to help NOBC get funds elsewhere and might be able to supply some money "in an emergency situation."

Again, an unequivocal "maybe."

There were no doubts and hesitations, however, on one point. The bishops registered loud and clear their belief that they are presently spending too much on national-level programs of all kinds. The deficit in the 1972 budget is about $800,000—down from $2 million in the previous budget but still more than the bishops can digest. In three related votes, they were nearly unanimous: not to increase the diocesan assessment for NCCB-USCC ($2.45 million), to end deficit financing in the NCCB-USCC budget and to cut back programs to match the level of available funds.

As the financial cincture gets tighter and tighter in future years, the bishops will find themselves, whether they like it nor not, defining their national priorities in dollars and cents in their annual budgets. So far, although still highly tentative, this definition seems to be forming a pattern—controversial programs, and those dealing with minorities that are becoming militant, will have to find their funds somewhere else.

The UN Office could hardly be considered controversial any more by anyone to the left of *Twin Circle*, and its fate is still uncertain. But the NOBC has called for the appointment of a black archbishop for the two-thirds black District of Columbia and is talking about developing a distinctive liturgy for black Catholics. Equally disturbing, at the other end of the spectrum, was the Task Force on Urban Affairs, whose program director, Msgr. Geno Baroni, has gravitated toward the special problems of white ethnic groups—and away from the bishops' funding. Funds for PADRES, a group of priests who work among Spanish-speaking Americans, were also absent from this year's budget.

These deletions do not mean that the bishops are turning entirely away from political entanglements, however. One of the few arms of the hierarchy to receive a budget increase for the coming year was the Office of Government Liaison, which "is responsible for liaison with Members of Congress and Congressional Committees on matters of federal legislation of interest to the U.S. Catholic Conference." This office got exactly what it asked for—$120,455—up from $113,829.

NOBC still has enough money to keep its staff operations going through next summer and may be able to get other funding by then. If it does, it will parallel one of the most activist branches of USCC, the Latin America Bureau, which is part of the bishops' organization but supports itself entirely on outside funds.

Brother Joseph Davis, head of the NOBC, has a specially problematic position because, although he wants and needs money from the bishops to get his office well established and in motion, he does not want to be part of the NCCB-USCC structure with the limitations of independence implied by such status.

The fate of Rev. Louis Colonnese, who was removed from the directorship of the Latin American Bureau, is an object lesson proving that financial independence may not be quite enough. JOHN OVERBROOK

(John Overbrook is a pseudonym.)

Will the FDA Get the Lead Out?

The timid regulations recently proposed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requiring cautionary labels on certain lead-based household paints typify the shameful refusal of officials at all levels of government to take decisive measures against the "silent epidemic" of lead poisoning that afflicts some 400,000 predominantly poor children annually.

Though city air, foods and water contain concentrations of lead, the ingestion of flakes of lead-based paint is by far the most common and dominant cause of lead poisoning among children. The disease has long been recognized as an environmental hazard. Yet it was not until 1970 that Congress finally acted, with the passage of the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act.

The law itself is limited in scope. It seeks to promote the removal of lead paint from existing homes and to curtail its use in federally assisted housing. The Nixon

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Administration tried to smother the Act at its birth by asking for an appropriation of only $2 million for its implementation. The efforts of Congressman William F. Ryan of New York and others secured an appropriation of $7.5 million, still only a fraction of what a meaningful attack on the "silent epidemic" would require.

The dimensions of the lead-poisoning problem are staggering. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) estimates that each year 16,000 victims of the disease need treatment, 3,200 incur moderate to serious brain damage, and 800 must have medical care for the rest of their lives. A recent study found that 30 to 50 percent of the babies born in the District of Columbia may be expected to develop undue body burdens of lead, producing effects ranging from nervous disorders to severe mental retardation.

Though the worst cases of lead poisoning result from children eating flakes of paint manufactured before World War II and containing a high content of lead, the human body can accumulate dangerous lead levels from the ingestion of paint with a low lead content. The paint industry itself recognized this 16 years ago when it adopted a voluntary standard limiting the lead content in household paint to 1 percent.

But the FDA, charged for more than a decade with responsibility for protecting the public against hazardous household products, has moved with glacial speed to utilize its legal authority to counter the lead-paint problem. On October 28, 1971, the agency finally proposed regulations under the Hazardous Substances Act dealing with lead-based paint. They provide for mandatory cautionary labeling of household paint containing more than 0.5 percent lead.

The National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association, which represents 90 percent of the paint industry, immediately applauded this proposal, as did the lead industry's trade association. On the other hand, the dictates of common sense suggest that warning labels remain with the containers, and are of no use after the paint is applied to a surface. A tenant will scarcely be in a position to know the lead content of the paint in the house or apartment he is renting.

This past summer, despite the paint industry's own voluntary standard, paints for interior use with up to 10.8 percent lead levels were found on the shelves of New York stores. The FDA regulations would not prohibit the sale of these paints so long as their containers bear warning labels.

The Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act, which went into effect on January 13, 1971, authorized the Secretary of HEW to take steps to prohibit the use of paint with 1 percent or more lead content in homes constructed or rehabilitated with federal funds. It was not until November 16 that the Secretary got around to implementing this mandate by publishing a regulation that calls upon other federal agencies to prohibit the use of such paint by means of clauses in contracts for the federally assisted construction or rehabilitation of houses or apartments. Experience with other forms of contract-compliance enforcement as a method of carrying out federal policies teaches that this approach is very often a sham, a classic "no-law law" in its de facto non-application.

An obvious way to prevent the sale and application of leaded household paints is to invoke provisions of the Hazardous Substances Act enabling the FDA to ban the marketing of dangerous products used in the home. Under the Act, the FDA can invoke such a ban after finding that no amount of cautionary labeling would be sufficient to protect the public health and safety from a serious, substantial hazard.

An ad hoc committee of doctors and scientists brought together by the Bureau of Community Management of the U.S. Public Health Service recently concluded that the maximum daily permissible intake of lead from all sources for children is 300 micrograms. Studies have shown that a child ingests 106 to 146 micrograms each day from food, water and air. An average chip of paint with 0.5 percent lead contains 450 micrograms of lead.

Despite these figures and increasing medical concern over the dangers of low levels of lead intake, the FDA has thus far eschewed an aggressive attack on the problem, preferring instead to keep the paint and lead industries happy. Its performance adds fuel to the fires of those supporting a bill latterly drafted by the Senate Commerce Committee to dismantle the FDA and build a new Consumer Safety Agency from scratch.

Congressman Ryan, *Village Voice* editor Jack Newfield, Dr. Edmund O. Rothschild of New York, myself and two Georgetown law students have filed their own petition with the FDA, calling for a ban of all household paints containing more than trace elements of lead. During the next month and a half, interested parties may file with the agency comments on both this petition and the FDA's proposed regulations. The FDA itself must then decide which route to take.

The Environmental Hazards Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics has just taken a position favoring the petition filed by Congressman Ryan *et al.* The Committee has urged that the maximum limit of lead content in paints be set at minimum traces, or 0.06 percent.

It is, and has been for some time, technologically feasible to take the lead out of paints. Hence bureaucratic and Congressional lethargy must bear more than a small share of the blame for debilitating the health of countless children.

JOSEPH A. PAGE

(Joseph A. Page is associate professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C.)

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CHARITY

Stuart Dybeck

"I was walking down the street adding up one quarter times 5 per day times 3 days per week times 49 weeks per year times how many years per life when I saw this panhandler coming a block away. . . ."

THE Agency assigned me to a slum on the south side of Chicago. There among mind-staggering problems I encountered a small problem everyone faces in one way or another. People kept hitting me for handouts. Walking around the shabby streets in my white skin and blue suit made me appear wealthy. I *was* relatively rich.

Sometimes a group of black guys my own age standing outside the Record Shack gesturing and laughing would see me coming and spread out across the sidewalk. By the time I got there they were staring in stony silence —some jiving blankly to the music, some amused, a few with open hostility.

"Hey social worker, you got some loose change?"

"I wanna buy me some cigarettes, man."

"Gimme a quarter."

After while I realized they didn't want the money so much as they wanted to see how I'd react: scared that if I didn't give they'd kick my ass, or would I try to be cool and joke it off ("Money! man, I'm paid in food stamps,") or would I be professional and digging out my wallet distribute cards instructing them where to go for Adult Education classes (maybe then they *would* kick my ass, waiting creaky on the fourth-floor landing of some mine-shaft dark tenement). Or maybe I wouldn't say anything, just walk on by like the caseworker chicks did sometimes—downcast eyes, smiling the martyr's half-smile—and they'd watch her hips swing into the distance discussing whether or not she was out here looking for it.

Sometimes some drunk would latch onto me, follow me down the street clutching at my elbow, stumbling, slobbering, explaining he was colored and I was white and what the hell did I know about it, and he was old and I was young and man when you're old everything hurts every minute. Telling me anything he could think of, all the memories and stories flooding into his head through the sluice of alcohol, but always amounting to the same tragedies and hard luck, the same line manufactured out of past realities: he needed winter clothes for his little baby, or money for carfare so he could get a job, or for his TB—here he'd cough up a hoker and lay it on the sidewalk green among pecking crowds of pigeons.

Or a few had a better approach: look man, I ain't gonna bullshit ya, I need it for a drink. Maybe they'd walk away if you shook your head no. But many were persistent believing if they just bugged you long enough you'd pay to get rid of them. And if that didn't work they'd beg because if there's one thing a man can't stand it's another man begging him—particularly in public with everybody watching.

For lunch I'd usually go to McDonald's Hamburgers. It was a drive-in, all glass, tile and stainless steel gleaming under neon. I didn't have a car but there were benches where you could sit outside and eat your hamburger and fries. Across the street the city was moving mountains of tenements. Pardon this inconvenience, Another Improvement being made for a Greater Chicago, Richard J. Daley, Mayor, the signs said. Workmen drove muddy, yellow bulldozers over fields of rubble. Drills clacked their prophecies of new foundations while kids chased up and down the huge mounds of dirt around the excavation pits. Blocks behind the site, modern highrise housing projects rose up like walls. Usually a bunch of kids would come up and mooch

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dimes off me for cokes. After they bought them they'd stand around discussing the White Sox with me, munching the ice after the drink was gone.

When I was new to the job—my first few months—constantly getting hit for money used to bother me. First I tried the open-handed approach and gave something to whoever asked. Usually all they wanted was a quarter. But I guess the word got out because everybody on the street began asking me for money. Each day I was out there the same people would show up. The handouts began adding up. But what was worse I worried about being thought of as something no self-respecting caseworker wants to be thought of as—a sucker.

So then I made myself judge. Decided I'd only give money to people who really looked like they needed it. To whoever needed it! This, of course, was symptomatic of getting so close to the madness of the slum that your actions become absurd. But my absurdity was accepted by the neighborhood as something to be expected. When I'd refuse to shell out they argued: "Look man, I know you gave something to Clyde Jones. How come you give to him and not me? Is he a better friend, man? his problems bigger than mine? Or howbout yesterday! Lucy Winters says you layed a half a buck on her. What she doin' that I ain't?"

I could have said, "Look man, it's my money to do what I want with." But somehow this seemed to lead down The Lord Giveth The Lord Taketh away path of Miss Trainer's lectures.

Miss Trainer had a repertoire of lectures painstakingly collected over many years of service. Each new worker got to hear the one about "and I'm sick and tired of hearing young people knocking The System in front of recipients when it's The System that puts clothes on their backs and YOURS too!"

I'd dismissed her as just another of the frustrated old bitches The System was full of, who'd been rewarded for years of mediocrity and compliance with supervisory positions. It wasn't until the day I heard her lecture in Intake that I realized the extent of her power. The lecture began with a command for silence—her throat cleared into a pinched kleenex—while all around her unwed mothers shushed illegitimate children.

"I hope none of you down here can work because if you can you won't get a cent out of US. I have to work for my money; you don't think the taxpayers pay me for staying home and having babies, do you? Of course not. If you are found eligible for Public Aid you will be expected to cooperate with our many programs to rehabilitate you. After all, friends, Public Aid though a privilege of our great country is not charity. We don't want you to feel like you're receiving a dole—no one with any pride wants that—feel rather that we are making an investment in your future and through that in the future of democracy."

I needed another approach but there never seemed time enough to figure one out. It was a minor problem—one that didn't pertain to the majority of cases on my load. Most of the requests came from their friends and neighbors—cripples, old people, kids, addicts, con men—all those who had failed to qualify or had successfully avoided the welfare rolls. When my clients asked me for money it was usually as a loan which they insisted on paying back. They weren't interested in testing me. They needed the money, maybe for a pair of shoes for the kid who was starting Head Start or just for a pack of cigarettes at the end of the month when the money from their unbelievably small aid checks ran out.

There never seemed to be time to figure out an approach to anything. The office was a madhouse. My desk tottered beneath stacks of ragged case records I was always going to read.

Name: Julie McCall
Case #: ADC 1795502
Address: 3915 Cottage Grove
Birth Place: Greenwood, Mississippi

After clearing a space to write on I'd sit and try to concentrate on a letter to the mental health service worded strongly enough so that Julie McCall might be moved up a few ranks in the infinite line of people waiting for free therapy. I had to be careful not to word it too strongly so that when it passed under the bifocaled inspection of the arch-enemy, my supervisor, she didn't initiate proceedings to remove the children from the home. Such proceedings would never conclude. Their only effect was to divert energy away from dealing with the problem; their only purpose was to cover the supervisor in case something should happen. The telephones rang constantly like burglar alarms as if we were in a continual process of being robbed. Occasionally the hysterical voice of a caseworker could be heard above the din shouting into the phone that he had been ordered to hold the client's check because she had not shown up for housekeeping training.

Dear Mental Health Service,

I am writing in reply to your letter regarding ADC 1795502. A waiting period of six months before therapy is inconceivable given the current situation. Mrs. McCall undergoes weekly "epileptic fits" which have been diagnosed as possibly hysteric in nature. In recent interviews she has become increasingly despondent and has indicated powerful anxiety associated with past experiences. She was fucked frequently by her father between the ages of twelve and sixteen. Her two oldest children are reportedly his. Her husband, a man thirty years older than Mrs. McCall, is threatening desertion because he can no longer support her and the chil-

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dren plus his family of ten by a previous marriage. Unknown to Mrs. McCall her oldest son, Charles, a boy of twelve who is still in fourth grade, offered to blow the caseworker for a quarter during the last home visit. Due to rapid deterioration of the home

It was always at such a point that my phone would ring. Perhaps it would be Mrs. McCall herself calling as she did at least once a week to tell me she was going to kill herself and the kids.

"Don't Mrs. McCall."

"Why not? What we got to live for?"

"Things will get better."

"You crazy! I'm gonna turn the gas on and kill us all!"

"Please don't do it Mrs. McCall."

"I'm gonna do it this time for sure."

"But your children want to live."

"How do you know?"

"Anybody can see that . . . they're great kids. You've done your best raising them so far. They love you."

"They ain't happy—they just ain't sure how bad it is yet. I can't get 'em nothin. They lucky if they got enough to eat."

"But you give them love."

"Love?! What good's that without something to eat, some new clothes once in a while like other kids get?"

"You can't just give up."

"I sure can. My head hurts all the time, all I do is cry and worry about my kids—that they'll grow up like me. My head keeps hurtin. You my worker. You suppose to do somethin."

I tried to do something. I talked a friend of mine, a psychiatrist with a private practice, into giving her a half a hour of his time a week free. I paid the fifty cents carfare and two-fifty childcare that it cost for her to get there. This arrangement lasted about a month and then she stopped going to see him.

"What the hell happened, Bill, you were suppose to do something," I complained.

"I tried to," he said, "but going back to that environment screwed everything up. Analysis is for the middle class, man. What she needs to solve her problems is fifty bucks more a week."

"Why'd you stop going?" I asked Julie McCall.

"It was wastin the money," she said, "nothin but talk. Besides that man is crazy, he tole me not to feel so bad about what my daddy done to me."

Walking downstairs from her apartment I almost trip over Charles McCall sitting crouched on a stair beside the bannister. He's holding himself like he's got a stomach ache.

"What are you doing here, Charlie?"

"Listening. Look what I got." He holds up a new looking transistor radio. The earplug dangles from his ear.

"Nice . . . one of those Japanese ones?"

"You wanna know how I got it, right?"

"Uh."

We step out of the piss-damp hallway. The sun bounces into our eyes off windshields and windows.

"I didn't steal it, heh-heh, it's a present."

He stares up at me with his translucent twelve-year-old face, eyelids wizened by sunlight. He winks. "You dig? What kinda music you like?" He turns the little radio on full blast and won't talk anymore, strolling past other kids down the street, dangling earplug plugged back in.

"I talked a friend of mine, a psychiatrist with a private practice, into giving her a half hour of his time a week free. I paid the fifty cents carfare and two-fifty childcare that it cost for her to get there. This arrangement lasted about a month and then she stopped going to see him. . . ."

ONCE after hours I went to a bar to hear Muddy Waters with a friend of mine who'd started out with the Agency but ended up working full-time for "the Movement." We'd both been drinking a lot all afternoon. It was hotter than hell at the end of August and we were drinking cold beers and at the point where after every beer you have to get up and piss. Muddy was great singing one blues after another, sweat beaded on his face, his sportshirt hanging out. All the instruments were electric and they kept blowing fuses so they had to turn the air conditioner off. The drummer worked before a microphone; the guy who played harp cupped it against a microphone and when he fanned it the cord lashed around so it looked like an instrument with a long black tail. They had the doors open at both ends of the bar to catch the draft. It wasn't very dark yet. The windows still held some orange. The bar was loud and packed with a few couples trying to dance pressed against the wall and dripping beer bottles being passed over the heads at the bar. Kids squirmed through the tunnel the bar stools made on the pretense of shining shoes. After getting back from a trip to the john I find this guy in my seat talking in Al's ear. Al's just sitting there smiling with his money spread out before him on the bar.

"Give me a buck, man. C'mon brother this is one of your own askin ya . . . don't be a cheap mother. We

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"It had been a year and a half now that I'd been representing the bureaucracy, promising people aid they never got, jobs where there weren't any, . . . poking my nose in, spying—that's what the job basically was—the spying. But hell, I thought, at least I'm trying to do something. . . ."

got to help each other. I'm thirsty too, man. Fifty cents? . . . okay, just buy me a beer."

Al says, "Don't bother me, man, I don't have time for that shit."

The guy shrugs and moves down the line.

I tried it in the district a few times and it worked pretty well on drunks. There was something cavalier about the "I don't have time for that shit" part that got them. But it obviously wasn't an all-around technique. The "Reversal" was even more limited—just as the guy has his timing down and is about to ask you for something you turn and face him eye to eye with your palm extended and say, "Hey friend, can you spare two bits?"

What I finally did arrive at was a common-sense approach. Somebody would hit me for money and I'd say, "Look man, I'd like to help you but do you have any idea how many times a day I get asked out here? If I started giving to everybody who asked me I'd have to be a millionaire."

That usually worked. It was much better than asking "Why should I?" because then they'd say "cause you got something extra and I ain't got enough." It had the effect of depersonalizing the request, of lumping them in with a group which made it seem like the odds were against me.

But the best thing about it was that I believed it the most. There was the part about "I'd like to help you." That was true. I would. And yet it was realistic. I was making about $500 a month before taxes and the caseworkers were getting ready to go on strike. Who knew how long that might last. I had nothing saved. My rent was $85.00 a month. I ate my meals out. I was paying $100 a month tuition, going to grad school full-time at night in order to stay out of the draft. Whatever was left disappeared, mostly on drinking. If I got hit for a quarter five times per day and was in the field three times a week and about forty-nine weeks a year—I was entertaining the thought of the Agency giving us so much per month to give to moochers just the way they reimbursed us for transportation expenses. I mentioned the idea to Joe Faigabank who was union treasurer.

"We can't ask them to do that," he said.

"Why not—don't you have to loan out money when you're out in order to do your job sometimes?"

"Yeah, but look, trace the idea out to its logical conclusion. If you can do that why can't you just go out there and start giving the money away? You give the caseworker a wad and he just walks around poor neighborhoods handing it out. Even the commies wouldn't support that."

"At least I'd know what the hell I'm suppose to be doing out there."

"You're suppose to be rehabilitating the disadvantaged by filling out forms in triplicate," Joe said.

"And looking for their boyfriend's shoes under the bed. Well, bring it up at the next meeting anyway, will you?"

Joe just stood there for a while punching staples in a random case record. When he figured enough time had elapsed to convince me he'd thought it over he said, "Okay, figure it out and write up some statistics."

"When do you think we're going out on strike?"

"They're going to discuss it at the next meeting," Joe said. "They gotta give us more bread man, I'm barely making it."

"Can you believe it's possible for an ADC mother with five kids to make it on $250.00, man?"

"Has to be something on the side. Boyfriends. That's the only way. The people who make up those budgets have Ph.D.'s in Home Economics."

"We ought to get the recipients out on strike with us."

"What? A hunger strike?"

The hell with it, I thought, if we don't strike I'm quitting. It had been a year and a half now that I'd been representing the bureaucracy, promising people aid they never got, jobs where there weren't any, medical care from butchers, sending them to psychologists who tried to help them accept their poverty, poking my nose in, spying—that's what the job basically was—the spying. But hell, I thought, at least I'm trying to do something. Then Bertha Williams called me up.

Actually she had called me up about a month before and asked me to drop over. She wanted some advice. She was a lovely, gentle woman whose husband deserted her five years ago, leaving her with four kids to support. She had worked in a factory stuffing jock straps in boxes until she was knocked down by a lift truck and her spine injured. Somehow the company screwed her out of getting any compensation. We were friends, or as Miss Trainer preferred saying, we had rapport. I had been very lucky in helping Mrs. Williams out of a jam she should never have been in during my first winter as a caseworker.

It had been a very bad winter with many spells of zero weather. Mrs. Willams made the mistake of moving

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from a condemned building. Her case record was lost and her aid checks undelivered. When she first contacted me her new landlord had given her a five-day eviction notice. She'd been surviving for two months on what she had been able to borrow from relatives and friends most of whom were little better off than she was. Her apartment had no furniture—some boxes and a mattress on the floor, a hot plate, but no refrigerator. She had been keeping her perishable foods on the windowsill, pulling them in at intervals so they wouldn't freeze, until someone got wise and stole them. I managed to talk the landlord into turning her heat back on and lifting the eviction notice. When I went to the office her case had been supposedly transferred from, I found her case record and checks among the myriad memoes that had accumulated on the desk of her previous worker. He had quit over a month before and still hadn't been replaced. I had a violent argument with my supervisor who took the position that since Mrs. Williams had managed to exist for two months without aid then apparently she didn't need it. She was overruled however and the Agency approved $15.00 for a refrigerator. Her landlord, astounded at receiving his back rent, got us a good deal on a "hot" Frigidaire.

Mrs. Williams trusted me. She wanted some advice on her ten-year-old son, Irwin. He had a hernia, she explained, and she wondered whether she should have corrective surgery performed now or wait until he was older. I told her that was strictly a medical decision which I couldn't make, but that I did know that scar tissue heals faster at a young age. We talked about the possible effects growing up with a hernia might have on the boy like affecting his interest in sports or his entrance into puberty. I advised her to discuss it with a doctor. When I returned to the office I wrote out a referral to County Hospital for Irwin and mailed it to Mrs. Williams.

At first I didn't recognize her voice.

"Who am I speaking to, please?"

"This is Mrs. Williams," Her voice was flat and hollow at the same time.

"How are you, Mrs. Williams? How did Irwin make out? Did he have his operation?"

"Yes."

"How's he doing?"

"He's dead."

I had an impulse to hang up. The phones were ringing. "He's dead? How could he be dead from a hernia operation? It's not that serious." For some reason I didn't believe her.

"He's dead," she said, "that's all I know. He died on the operating table."

"But how!—didn't they tell you how?"

"I guess they did. They said they had to cut a hole in his throat but that it didn't work. I don't know; I didn't understand them."

"I'm sorry," I said.

"I'm calling to find out about the funeral," she said. "Are you all gonna pay for it?"

"Yes . . . tell the undertaker to call me and I'll make out the forms . . . I'm sorry, Mrs. Williams.

"Thanks," she said and hung up.

I listened to the phone buzz for a while and then dialed County Hospital. I asked for information about Irwin. They gave me the runaround until I started hollering about an investigation. I didn't tell them I was a caseworker. I said I was with the Mayor's Office. A doctor explained that the boy had a heart defect which had gone undetected and his heart failed during the operation. They did all they could—performed a tracheotomy and massaged his heart but he died. There was nothing anybody could do, he said. It was one of those things.

I hung up and my phone rang almost immediately.

"This is Mrs. Williams again. I hate to bother you but on our budget for next month . . . do you have to take Irwin off right away. I could use his twenty-five dollars to buy us some clothes for the funeral."

"I'll leave him on," I said.

"Thanks," she said. "I appreciate it."

I WAS coming back from the funeral. It was early in spring and tiny blades of grass were pushing up from mud, through broken glass from beer bottles, among cracks in the sidewalk. Papers that had been buried in snow dried yellow and blew around. It was my last day in the district. Joe Faigabank asked me to organize my ideas on a handout fund before I quit. He figured it would be a little something extra the union could concede over the bargaining table. Rumors of a public employees' strike against the Agency continued to circulate. Newspapers carried articles predicting riots in the Negro community during the coming "long, hot summer."

I thought on my last day I would remember my first day and see everything vividly again, but I didn't. I was walking down the street adding up one quarter times 5 per day times 3 days per week times 49 weeks per year times how many years per life when I saw this panhandler coming a block away. I see him getting ready to mooch and automatically prepare my excuses: I'd like to help you man, but do you realize how much I'd be spending if I gave to everyone who asked for it, not just you, man, but all the charities for orphans and war victims and mental illness and cancer and the heart fund and kidney disease and the Panthers and the Peace Movement and I'm hardly making it myself, brother.

No socks. At half a block I see his red-rimmed eyes behind cracked foggy glasses, a crushed hat, baggy pants with dragging frayed cuffs, a too-thin even for this spring day topcoat, limping like a scarecrow assembled at a Good Will store. He blinks at me and says, "Can you give me one cent?"

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CHILE CON ALLENDE

Donald D. Ranstead

"Chile is finally having to confront . . . certain unpleasant economic facts."

Chile is a country whose leaders and people seldom do the irrevocable until they are quite sure that the consequences will not be disastrous. Thus, Independence from the Spanish Crown was not declared until 1818, after the last decisive battle was won (although the first "gesture of 1810" is now celebrated as "Independence Day"). Its only civil war, in 1891, cost less lives than any week of the decisive year 1863 in the U.S. Civil War. The Chilean Establishment has, for over 150 years, always managed to avoid head-on collisions with rising classes and make overdue rearrangements of the political and social power structure in time. In this respect the Chileans (or, rather, its Establishment) are "the English of South America."

One needs to abandon all sociological preconceptions based on European or U.S. experience when analyzing Chile's recent past. There was indeed a Popular Front coalition voted into power peacefully in 1938, but the victory was dependent on fascist support and was a government which did not even break with the Axis until the end of 1943. There was a Christian Democratic government (PDC) in power from 1964-1970 whose program and actions, such as its principled condemnation of the U.S. intervention in Santo Domingo, would have horrified De Gaspari had he been alive. Today the Rightist *Partido Nacional* supports the Marxist-Socialist President's confiscation of U.S. copper holdings and the Cardinal of Chile sits with President Allende during May Day festivities.

Chile also has its *fidelista* left, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), with its many splinters (one of which was responsible for the assassination of the PDC ex-Vice-President of Chile six months ago). *El compañero Presidente* (as Dr. Salvador Allende prefers to be called by his supporters) urges these groupings to read Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, to close ranks behind the *Unidad Popular* (UP) and stick to UP legality. The government's sweet reasonableness of the past months has not deterred these groups from making *"tomas"* (take overs) of factories and farms (often very small ones). This activity, only possible because of government permissiveness, is duly romanticized in, of all places, magazines like *Encounter*. The President contends that the MIR is alienating the small proprietor and acting illegally when it could, prosaically, "go through channels." The discovery of large deposits of munitions owned by MIR as well as that organization's habit of holding families hostages on their own farms finally forced, in early November, the police and even elements of the Socialist Party to act. The leader of the MIR, the son of the Rector of the University of Concepcion, and ex-student "Comandante Pepe" will not face any consequences—their peasant following probably will. However, as the leading Chilean economic monthly, *Panorama Económico*, of June-July put it, "seldom in our history or whatever history, has such a substantial change in a structure of power taken place with such a low social cost."

Chou En-lai disagrees. In an interview granted to a Mexican daily he contended that Allende has the government but not the power and that the army, not being "popular," could tip the scales for reaction if it desired. The North American socialist, Paul Sweezy, said much the same here recently in a university-sponsored symposium. This kind of analysis, which encourages the MIR to speak of "infiltrating" and "propagandizing" among the enlisted men in the army, infuriates the Communists and makes the President (not to mention army officers) very nervous. This "infantile disorder" is really a symptom of a frustrating economic situation. As one of Chile's leading economists, Anîbal Pinto, put it a few years ago: "The country suffers from certain weaknesses which are best called 'structural,' in the sense that they are 'given' and are *relatively* independent of political changes." (Emphasis in the original.)

Briefly, Chile is finally having to confront and solve certain unpleasant economic facts. It is a small country with copper its one basic dollar-earning export. It has had a stagnant agricultural sector unable to feed its rising population for over 25 years. The domestic market is too small to absorb much locally produced durable goods and such modern sectors as exist are capital-intensive, not labor-intensive, so unemployment is always, if not evident, an immediate threat. The chronic inflation adds yet more variables. Inflation is the main factor making for a rampant consumer psychology in all classes, but especially the middle and upper. The feeling is —if you've got it, spend it—and quick. The plethora of boutiques and restaurants in the suburbs is explained by

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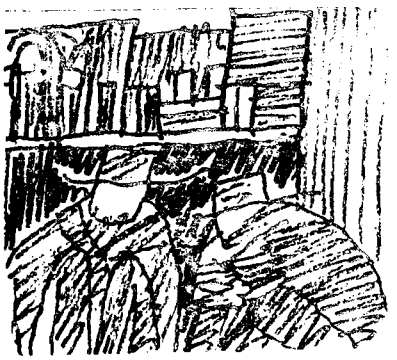
this ingrained habit. This "way of life" means that only 16 percent of the gross national product is saved annually. President Allende, on November 4, called for a 19 percent rate. Economists (of all persuasions) note that if the country is to drop reliance on foreign loans it must rise to 25 percent if a minimum 5 percent growth rate is to be sustained. Here is one area where "democracy" is in danger. Can forced loans be applied? Will the political muscle of key unions and the vociferous middle class have to be broken or will persuasion work?

If this were not enough, there is also what Pinto calls the relative equilibrium of those interest-groups which got some, at least, of the power when the last basic redistribution took place 30 years ago. These groups include, in addition to the old capitalist-landowner element (fast disappearing in 1971), some privileged sectors of organized labor, some government employees and other middle-class groups. This balance, which includes perhaps 25 percent of the population, makes it very difficult to redistribute the gross national product along new lines. Much of the fault lies with the Socialists and Communists who, for some 30 years after (temporarily) joining the "Establishment," proved uninterested in the difficult chore of presenting analyses or goals other than those of a purely distributive character. This emphasis



ultimately favored the best organized of the working-class and positively damaged (through inflationary effects) the lower-middle-class, the majority of the non-organized workers and all of the peasantry. This harsh judgment, concurred in by most scholars, is softened by the undeniable fact that in the past three to four years the socialist parties have broadened their appeal.

From another angle that "low social cost" alluded to above, involving the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism—apart from the still unsolved social injustices—is reflected in an aspect of the Chilean economic structure unique for a Latin American country. The state, for the past 30 years and especially during the past decade, has become more and more involved in economic activity. Thus, by 1969 the fixed investment in the public sector had reached 38.6 percent of the whole (Mexico's is 38.8 percent), and direct and indirect investments of state funds in the national economy equaled 70 percent of the total in 1968. By the time President Allende assumed power over half of all short-term loans were controlled by the State Bank. The *Corporación de Fomento* (the Chilean RFC) has expanded its activities enormously since its founding three decades ago. The "commanding heights" of the economy, as Lenin would have said, are under firm state aegis, either as sole owner or the controlling partner in "mixed" concerns. When the UP speaks of large capitalist combines it really only involves, as the President himself concedes, some 120-150 enterprises which have assets of over 14 million escudos (less than $500,000 at the official rate). Not much of a dragon to slay. Now with 90 percent of the private banks nationalized, there is precious little consequential private sector left apart from the opposition press. However, up until now the predominant state role has been a passive one: In addition to helping the capitalists to help themselves it has confined itself to activities involving loans, regulation and short-term planning. (The copper situation is another story and is treated below.) The challenge for the UP is to enliven the public administration, to have it take on more tasks and involve itself in long-range planning as well as securing active worker cooperation and management on the plant level.

The bewildered Chilean electorate (extended recently to include 18-year-olds, enlisted soldiers and the blind) has voted intelligently over the past 20 years considering the choices available. To a political observer the pragmatism shown by Establishment leaders is matched by that of the average voter. In 1952 a populist leader "above parties" was tried, and by 1957 the country was on the ropes. In a close vote the following year the no-nonsense orthodox conservative, Jorge Alessandri, won. At the end of his term in 1964 the only basic change was a vastly increased foreign debt incurred mainly on onerous terms. From 1964 to 1970 the left-liberal PDC leader Eduardo Frei tried his hand. He did bring change to the countryside, legalizing and encouraging peasant unions and starting land reforms (something the Popular Front did not even have in its program in 1938). He attempted to provide forms of organization for the *marginales* in city slums, as well as extend public health services and education. Yet, although the PDC instituted income taxes and property taxes, the impasse mentioned above remained much the same. The PDC did, however, successfully raise expectations, something which was to rebound to the advantage of the UP coalition in September, 1970.

How unified is the *Unidad Popular* coalition? Of the three major parties which made up 95 percent of the electoral base of the UP a year ago, only the Communists are still united and (verbally at least) 100 percent behind Allende and the UP program. The Socialists, always prone to splintering, are divided with the more traditional leaders accusing the present Party leadership of providing cover for *Ministas* and other super-left Johnny-Come-Latelies. The public accusations of double

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membership are not denied and one long-time Socialist deputy from the south has recently been expelled for denouncing the MIR *"tomas"* in his province. The Radicals are also split. This traditionally opportunistic center party (it was part of Alessandri's coalition in the early 1960s and outlawed the Communists in 1947 when it had the Presidency and most ministries) has a deservedly dwindling electoral base. (It only polled 8.5 percent of the total in last April's municipal elections.) The leadership is now stressing its "Marxism." This profession of Marxism has also spread to the ex-Christian Democrats now in the coalition and has caused a split in that camp as well. President Allende contends, with justification, that "Marxists" can join the Socialists or Communists. He has urged the Radicals and Christian left to broaden their bases among the middle classes, students and peasantry, most of whom do not profess any variety of Marxism, and do it before the MIR or PDC reach them.

Sectarianism

If there is sectarianism within most of the elements making up the UP, there is also UP sectarianism as a whole and in varying degrees in the huge public administration, newly nationalized industries, and in the University of Chile, towards non-UPers. Last month the leadership of the PDC argued that the UP does not have a monopoly on the Chilean Revolution and that sectarianism helps no one and that sectors of his coalition have attempted to impede an accord between the PDC and the President. Much of the dispute, although colored in pretentious ideological terminology, is simply a reflection of the Ins-vs.-the-Outs aspect of a spoils system familiar to North Americans (and to *Chilenos* who remember as far back as 1964-65). The trouble now is that the Outs —the Allende Socialists, left Christians, and Communists—had been out for too long and are making up for having been 20 years in the political wilderness. Another built-in difficulty is that the UP and opposition (if one includes the traditional Right along with the PDC) are so evenly matched. The infighting at the University of Chile should be a horrible warning for all in the newly nationalized industries as well as the gigantic bureaucracy. There a very slender UP majority on one of the administrative boards decreed a sweeping reorganization of various faculties and schools. The 49 percent reacted by taking over most of the buildings affected. The matter, at time of writing, is still unresolved. In the last municipal elections the vote was almost literally 50-50 and in a by-election in Valparaiso four months ago the opposition candidate won by a mere 2 percent, enough for the PDC to speak of a landslide and the conservative *El Mercurio* of a basic change of trend. Both sides are plagued by people who have "feudal bases" in the public administration (including the University) and who speak of abstract principles when it is really parish pump politics. Decisions made seem a challenge. Obviously, direction is needed from the top.

President Allende has, as a seasoned politician of over 30 years standing and the son and grandson of Senators, held the coalition together up until now and made reasonable responses to PDC charges. He is grudgingly admired even by those *momios* (reactionaries) who hate the UP and all of its works. The trouble is, says the PDC, that the President reassures and makes conciliatory gestures but various sectors of his coalition do something else. *"Tomas"* are effected in factories or farms while the *carabineros* turn a blind eye. After the *"toma"* there is then the legalization, usually based on a long overlooked 1932 law permitting the Executive to bypass Parliament. The main objection of the PDC to the UP's performance to date can be summed up in the refrain of that old tune, "It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it." There has been some "backlash" to what the opposition considers the arbitrary measures of the UP. Thus, the opposition has won a majority in a number of recent union elections including the copper miners at El Salvador and, in the bitterly contested election for officers of the Secondary School Students' Federation, the left trailed the PDC 36 percent to 45 percent in a *gremio* it had controlled for 20 years. Allende, being an astute leader, called for "an end to sectarianism and exclusiveness" on the part of his supporters in his November 4 speech.

There are also disagreements as to whether prosperity or austerity is around the corner. The opposition contends that the cost-of-living rise this year is running at 30 percent whereas the government (as have all previous governments) relies on the official cost of living index which says 18 per cent. It depends on how you look at it: Often items on the index are not available but only a similar product at twice the price. etc. The *Sociedad de Fomento* (the Chilean Association of Manufacturers) charges that the year will end with a deficit in the balance of payments of some $210 million, the *Banco Central* says $150 million. The same business groups argue that the dollar reserves will be at an all-time low of $100 million the end of the year and that imports will have to be cut drastically next year (especially food imports which will run to $240 million this year). The President simply ignores these Cassandras and points to the fact that unemployment is down to 5 percent and that in the first nine months of 1971, and despite the July earthquake, 50,000 new housing units went up. The PDC says, yes but only because the State incurred an 11 billion escudo deficit in its 1971 budget (34 percent of the whole). Yet despite these various battles over statistics and sectarianism, there is national unanimity as to the merit of the UP's copper policy.

Something U.S. officials should always bear in mind is that *all* of the political parties of Chile voted for

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nationalization of Kennecott's and Anaconda's huge holdings. No political (or other) element has questioned the soundness of the—in effect—confiscatory nature of the take-over. (The Council of Chilean Bishops actually communicated to the Vatican its warm approval of the confiscation and pointed to it as a model for other Third World countries.) The vindictive Export-Import Bank denial of a loan for Chile to purchase three new commercial airplanes, even before the confiscation was announced, was denounced by all Latin American countries as well as the conservative opposition here. With the unilateral Nixon measures of last August in mind, Chile's proposal at a recent regional economic conference in Buenos Aires that there be a 10-year moratorium of servicing and repayment of all U.S. loans outstanding received a respectable hearing and some support--a circumstance unthinkable even two years ago. The U.S. should prepare itself for more reactions along these lines, especially since the Senate vote cutting all foreign aid, at the Third United Nations Conference for Trade and Development when it meets in Santiago de Chile next April. The U.S., these days, if it does nothing else, provides a catalyst for unity within Third World countries.

Finally, the question of freedom. As there have been two political elections in less than a year, the scrupulous fairness of which would make a Mayor Daley squirm, and the opposition has won most recent union elections, the future of press freedom is the only source of anxiety that might exist. The Inter American Press Association meeting last month in Chicago tried, primarily through its Brazilian (!) President, to get an admission from the representatives of the conservative Chilean press that such threats existed. To no avail—compatriots of Pablo Neruda, no matter how reactionary, are not about to wash any dirty linen in front of audiences containing Somoza's hired scribblers and Batista's ex's in the shadow of the *Tribune* tower. Even though there is some concern about what may happen when the government nationalizes the country's only paper supply, the average newspaper reader is convinced that the UP would not precipitate a major clash with the opposition on this sensitive issue. As for free speech and association, apart from the recent plethora of electoral campaigns on all levels, the Chileans know that their country is one of the very few in Latin America that has never accepted AID police "consultants" or had any truck with Hoover's minions. In Chile there is no mace or computerized political dossiers.

JOHN FANDEL

EPIC

Who, O Muse, would peruse it?

RIBBING ADAM

THE SCREEN

After their infant daughter has died, Catherine (Catherine Deneuve) and Marcello (Marcello Mastroiani) move to an apartment where their only furnishings are huge photostats of the dead child. This is a sick gesture, obviously, and Nadine Marquand Trintignant, the writer-director of *It Only Happens to Others*, realizes that it is. Yet her film is a bit too much like those photostats: a bit obsessive and inconsolable. Even Marcello and Catherine seem to realize at times that they are wallowing in self-pity, and that this is the most unsightly and futile of emotions. But Madame Trintignant still wants us to sympathize with them as characters . . . something it is probably impossible for us to do. Though we might feel about a real situation the way Madame Trintignant wants us to, such feelings cannot be transferred from life to art. Marcello and Catherine seal themselves into their apartment, blacking out all the windows and receiving few callers, in order to indulge their self-pity. This is perhaps the only wise thing to do. When Madame Trintignant sneaks her camera into the apartment despite their wish for privacy, she shows herself less wise than they.

Madame Trintignant loads her scenario with moments that are, like the dead images of the child, overbearing. She seems as determined as Marcello and Catherine not to admit that the death of an infant can occur irresistibly and without warning. The day before it happens Marcello sees a man running frantically through the streets with a sick child in his arms. This sort of gimmick creates an atmosphere in which everything begins to seem an omen. The day the baby dies was to have been the most important in Marcello's career. When he gets up that morning and begins to assemble his drawings (he's an automobile designer), we just know that something terrible is about to happen. And whatever does not seem ominous seems ponderously ironical. The night before the baby dies Marcello takes a Polaroid snapshot of her and her mother. At the end of the film, as Marcello and Catherine wander rootlessly around Europe trying to forget, they happen upon a party—a *wedding* party—at an inn. They join the festivities and for a moment they do forget, until Marcello takes a picture of Catherine. What comes out of the camera, like a ghost of all those photostats, is the forgotten picture of Catherine and the baby.

It may be that Madame Trintignant is the wrong person to make a film like this because she herself has lost an infant child. She is too involved in the subject to cope with it successfully. Someone who found self-pity a less seductive emotion would have made a better film.

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Perhaps *It Only Happens to Others* would have been improved by the consideration that It Could Happen to Anyone. But I'm not so sure about that either: both ways of looking at an infant death are pretty banal. No matter how you approach this subject, the only discoverable truths will probably prove too commonplace either to generate any drama or afford any consolation.

The *Three Lives* documented in Kate Millett's film cover, figuratively speaking, three generations of American women. Three women are each given roughly equal time to tell their stories, and their monologues comprise the film. The first is Kate's sister, Mallory Millett-Jones, who is a divorcee in her late twenties or early thirties. By her own account she was a wife who drove her husband to success in business, but then despised her own reliance on his accomplishments. She left him and has now settled in a loft in New York with her daughter. The second woman is Lillian Shreve, a woman somewhere in her fifties who is happily married. The third is Robin Mide, an ex-nice Jewish girl from Rego Park. A few years ago, when she was still in her teens, Robin stormed out of her parents' house and began bumming around the country. Though Robin has accumulated few possessions in her travels, she has had many lovers, some of whom have been other women.

Three Lives looks as if it is a very amateur film. One shooting session has unaccountably been done in color while the rest are in black and white. And the monologues are full of awkward little jump cuts that make the editing distractingly noticeable. But that which is cinematically amateur may not be so politically. The film is disarming. We don't suspect that a film as ill-made might have designs on us. We think it more straightforward than it is, and therefore assume that its themes come from its material instead of Ms. Millett's manipulation of that material. We have to bear in mind that this is a Women's Liberation Production, as it says in the credits, and Ms. Millett is interested primarily in polemics. She is willing to be dishonest to her own material in some ways in order to develop a politicized history of current American womanhood.

Her view is that history is progressive. Lillian, Mallory and Robin each represent stages of advancement in the historical liberation of women from men. Each carries a bit further than the former the determination not to suffer the indignity that she feels her mother suffered from her father. Kate lets Mallory speak first because her monologue establishes this determination explicitly. Mallory's decision to leave her husband came, she tells us, at the moment she realized she was wringing her hands over him just as her mother used to do. Mallory now feels that having had the courage to give up her dependence on men has straightened out her life. She sounds as if she is still as neurotic and unsettled as can be, but Kate tries to gloss over this. She ends Mallory's part of the film with a freeze frame at a moment when Mallory is making one of her tougher statements about the need to do without men. It is really a somewhat arbitrary movement on which to end: only the freeze frame makes Mallory's statement look self-assured and conclusive.

The presentation of Lillian Shreve's story contains a similar trick, for the film's editing juxtaposes anecdotes in ways that they don't seem to have been juxtaposed in Lillian's head. At one point, for instance, she tells a particularly grim tale about her father's treatment of her mother. Then the frame freezes again, as it often does in her segment of the film, and the tape of another story she has told is added voice-over. The second story is about her own husband's treatment of her. Now the kind of connection Mallory saw between her father and her husband is being made by implication only, and the implication is Kate's, not Lillian's. Nothing in what Lillian actually says, or in her manner, suggests that she herself sees the parallel the film here proposes. She does not seem to equate her husband with her father at all, nor do their treatments of their wives seem to have been comparably severe. Unable to discover the desired level of consciousness in Lillian, the film creates a false consciousness for her.

Deceptions and all, however, *Three Lives* is a better film than *It Only Happens to Others*. To emphasize the fact that the latter was made by a woman would perhaps be unfair, and to attribute its failures to this fact would definitely be unfair. But even in its failures of scruple, as well as in the strength of the three personalities it depicts, Ms. Millett's film is defiantly and originally female.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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JUDITH TATE

WHAT AN ARRIVAL THAT WOULD BE

"One doesn't arrive," explains the bald
anthropologist, "by mapped freeways which
go always Somewhere. One could begin by
snaking deep into steaming Mayan jungles.
There—thrusting up high through wet wild
leaves and fanning trees—stand strange
B. C. hieroglyphic stairs. Leading Nowhere."
Undeciphered, they keep the mystery of why
they lead to and end in air. "Perhaps,"
muses the anthropologist, "some mad Mayan
prince sensed that stone and spidered
gods were only ciphers held in awe." Maybe.
How I would like to trace those flaking
hieroglyphs and climb up up until I stood
tired and sublime with enameled jungle
green at my feet and blue air in my hair.
And, oh, then to take a sure-footed step out
onto that undeciphered, unabbreviated Air.

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BOOKS

Can Christian theology do without Christ?

Schweitzer: Prophet of Radical Theology

JACKSON LEE ICE

Westminster, $7.50

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

This book makes two major assumptions: that "Radical theology" (as practiced by a wide assortment of people, from Thomas Altizer to Norman O. Brown) has "unleashed a revolution emitting a positive and permanent impact" on modern religious concepts, and that Albert Schweitzer is its prophet. The first argument is more important than the second, and I should prefer to concentrate my attention at that point.

Professor Ice is clearly sympathetic with the particular theological approach and style adopted in the middle of the last decade by the death-of-God movement. Indeed, he argues (against the evidence, in my judgment) that this movement remains a viable intellectual option within contemporary Christian theology. He takes no apparent note of William Hamilton's 1967 *Christian Century* article, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Library," nor of Paul van Buren's own, less explicit disengagement from the erstwhile triumvirate (consisting of himself, Hamilton, and Altizer). I should agree, in fact, with Robert McAfee Brown's prognostic comment that Altizer's *Gospel of Christian Atheism*, published in May of 1966, signaled the death of death-of-God theology. What more can you say theologically after you've said that God once existed but died in history? (We have lived to see that the possibilities are limitless. Altizer has managed to produce yet another book about God entitled *The Descent into Hell*, which Ice curiously fails to mention.)

The author suggests that one of the several reasons for the neglect of Albert Schweitzer is the difficulty he poses for classifiers. Is he a philosopher or a theologian? Since many Christian theologians have refused to accept Schweitzer into the fraternity, they have tended to ignore him. Professor Ice is convinced that there is nothing at all "benign" about such neglect. Schweitzer is the forerunner of contemporary Radical theology. To understand and appreciate Schweitzer is to understand and appreciate where Christian theology is today.

Holding high the Schweitzerian lantern, Ice nonetheless falters as a guide to contemporary Christian theology. His definition of Radical theology (formulated in such wise that it can comfortably accommodate Schweitzer as a bona fide theologian) is so patently relative that our notion of Radical theology is made essentially dependent upon the opposition which it provokes in mainstream Christianity. It is "any thoroughgoing criticism or serious modification of the Judeo-Christian religion by concerned thinkers . . . which stresses innovative ideas demanding fundamental changes in belief that are at odds with, and hence unacceptable to, the main bodies of organized Christianity (or Judaism, as in the case of Rubenstein)." It would seem to follow, therefore, that a theology which many of the churches find helpful and pastorally significant cannot be Radical and, since "Radical" is where "it's at," cannot be academically or intellectually serious either.

Professor Ice has effectively identified some of the principal questions in contemporary theology (God, world, faith and the formulation of faith, Jesus, and eschatology). There are intelligent and generally lucid chapter-length presentations on each of these topics. But the reader is offered at the outset such a sprawling definition of what it's all about (and the wide variety of names thrown into the mix serves only to compound the confusion) that it is not always clear what it is that the author is trying to tell us. One might see an immediate parallel in another recently published work on contemporary "radical Catholicism." The same vagueness of definition produces the same implausible theological bedfellows (or mistresses, whatever the case may be).

More serious, however, is Professor Ice's fundamental ambivalence regarding the specific character of *Christian* theology. There is a rumor abroad that it is possible to do Christian theology without reference to Jesus of Nazareth or, failing that, without acknowledgement of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. Professor Ice appears to join those who are disposed toward making such a case. "To put it very bluntly," he states, "*Jesus* is not unique. . . . It is not *Jesus* that is unique but the fact that he makes *us* unique!" (The exclamatory style notwithstanding, it is difficult to see how that clarifies the matter.)

The author explicitly shies away from the term "Christ" and refuses to spend time laboring over another interpretation (which would require roughly the creation and development of a whole new religious tradition, with some historical reference to Christianity but which is itself no longer Christian). He says that he agrees with Michael Novak that Christian theology really "ought to try to do without (Christ)." (Novak will have to negotiate this alliance on his own.)

Jesus is not unique, Ice argues, and we can do without the title "Christ." And yet we are counseled to do *Christian* theology, to acknowledge

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Schweitzer as the *Christian* revolutionary, and to herald the dawn of a New *Christianity*. The ambivalence of the death-of-God movement, as uncovered with some systematic brilliance in Langdon Gilkey's *Naming the Whirlwind*, remains unresolved in Ice's *Schweitzer*: "Though I believe the question whether Schweitzer is or is not a Christian has heuristic value if it draws our attention anew to a serious attempt to clarify the essential features of Christianity, in the last analysis it is tediously peripheral." I should have expected almost any other conclusion than that. The identity-question is indeed the principal question underlying the whole book, and is also the principal question confronting anyone who presumes to do Christian theology. The author does not offer us much assistance in working through this problem. He admits that "the distinction between Jesus and other prisms of spiritual light is not explained theologically by the Radical theologians, if at all," with the implication that this is the way it really ought to be. But if theologians will not accept responsibility for theological explanations, then who must? Or is there no such thing as theology, when all is said and done? Does it have no distinctive sources, methods, and pastoral tasks?

In his response to Gregory Baum in these same pages (*Commonweal*, June 25, 1971), Hans Küng reminds us that "with all the necessary translation of the Christian message for our world today, it should still remain even today the Christian message! It will remain the Christian message though, only insofar as Jesus Christ himself and the original testimony concerning him (the New Testament) remains even today the ultimate criterion for all Christian theology and proclamation. In any act of translation, the original text must remain normative. . . . As seriously as it may regard the past, present, or future, Christian theology is ultimately determined by an historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. In him the faith of the Christian community has recognized

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and continues to recognize today the definitive revelation of God."

There is little middle ground between the position of Professor Ice and that of Hans Küng. The issue that divides them is *the* issue of Christian theology: is Jesus of Nazareth the Lord, or not? It is a question that no one—least of all a "Christian" theologian—can responsibly characterize as "tediously peripheral."

For Marx

LOUIS ALTHUSSER & ETIENNE BALIBAR

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Reading Capital

LOUIS ALTHUSSER

Pantheon, $5.95

LOUIS DUPRE

Since Marx's early statements about the abolition of philosophy, that discipline has seldom been fully readmitted by his orthodox followers. The remnants of philosophy in the writings before *The German Ideology* are believed to have been swept out by the "scientific" theory of the mature works. In two important studies, *For Marx* and *Reading Capital,* (which were written in the 1960's, the French Communist professor Louis Althusser reverses this trend. Marx's scientific theory, as he sees it, was the outcome of a philosophical insight and methodology never clearly formulated but constantly presupposed. Contrary to the opinion of many Western "humanist" interpreters, the implicit philosophy of *Capital* and the *Grundrisse* differed substantially from the Hegelian and Feuerbachian speculation of the early manuscripts. To Althusser the *Ideology* marks an "epistemological break" between the "ideological" philosophy of Marx's youth and the mature "scientific" philosophy of the later years. In the two essays "Contradiction and Overdetermination" and "On the Materialist Dialectic" he attempts to define the latter.

Communist theoreticians usually avoid the complex methodological problems by piously parroting Marx's claim that he had set Hegel back on his feet. But this misleading expression fails to reveal the true significance of Marx's thought even in its earliest stage. From the beginning Marx was at odds with the ideologically overdeveloped and socially underdeveloped cultural universe dominated by Hegelian speculation. Still, before he discovered the *practice* of the social movements in France and England Marx remained within what he was to call the "ideological" mode of reflection. Although his disagreement with Feuerbach was substantial, he still had not replaced the latter's anthropological philosophy by his own social-economic theory of history.

This is not to say that the advent of a Marxist type society immediately excludes the existence of ideologies. Even in the classless Communist society men first become conscious of their relations to one another as well as to the material conditions of their existence in the inextricable mixture of truth and falsity of an ideology. "Ideology (as a system of mass representations) is indispensable in any society if men are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence. . . . It is in ideology that the classless society *lives* the inadequacy/adequacy of the relation between it and the world. It is in it and by it that it transforms men's consciousness." Thus humanist ideals continue to inspire Communists as long as historical conditions allow them to consider themselves the advocates of a humanity which is oppressed in other societies.

Nevertheless in the "scientific" philosophy of the mature Marx such ideological considerations are overcome altogether. Here the opposition to Hegel's dialectic is complete with respect to the method as well as the content of Hegel's thought. The determinations of Marx's dialectic are formally different from those of Hegel's. In Hegel the contradiction which generates change and development is basically a simple one: it results from a progressive interiorization that requires no extrinsic determinations. For Marx the essential social contradiction, between the forces of production and the relations of production, is by itself insufficient to induce revolutionary change. To render it explosive an accumulation of circumstances must "fuse into a ruptural unity." The revolutionary contradiction is determined by the total social structure which it determines, or, in Althusser's terminology, it is "overdetermined." (In all this we hear more than an echo of Mao's distinction between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions.) The Russian revolution resulted not from a mere class contradiction but from a contradiction overdetermined by a complex situation in which the Czarist State, the Orthodox Church, the history of the Empire, even the geography of Eastern Europe played decisive roles.

Whatever the difficulties of Althusser's theory may be, at least it firmly reintroduces the *mutual* determination of economic and other factors. and allows a far greater complexity in the relation between infrastructure and superstructure than orthodox Marxists are wont to admit. To Althusser the rigidly economist interpretation of the dialectic of history (in Russia even today a textbook dogma) is merely the "mirror image" of Hegel's one-principled dialectic. The economic conjuncture never *simply* determines ideological superstructures: they also possess an autonomous effectivity. Economic production is the determining factor only "in the last instance." A revolution in

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REVIEWERS

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the structure does not *eo ipso* modify the existing superstructures as it would if the economic factor were the sole determinant.

The same complexity appears in the relation between theory and practice, commonly oversimplified to an inversion of the (misunderstood) Hegelian relation between Idea and reality. If practice means transforming raw material into specific products, theory (including the prescientific, ideological kind) is very much part of the practice. Moreover. if the dialectic is to be a useful tool for future action, it requires an accurate theory of the dialectic, that is, a philosophy. Without a philosophical methodology the theoretical practice will not be able to fend off the ever encroaching ideological concepts and constructions. Although Marx never found the time to write his *Discourse on Method*, he certainly was aware of the need for a theory of the relation between science and practice and was obviously guided by such a theory while he wrote *Capital*.

In *Reading Capital* Althusser attempts to develop the fundamental principles of the philosophical methodology which determined Marx's work. If we may believe Althusser, Marx himself was not fully aware of the nature of his achievement. He describes his work as a "critique" of political economy and his method as an inversion of Hegel's logic. Both statements underrate the import of Marx's theoretical revolution. To anyone who accepts the theory of *Capital* "political economy" becomes a pseudo-science built upon the false premise of preexisting human needs for which subsequently devised systems of production and distribution provide.

As for the inversion of Hegel's logic, we already know what Althusser thinks about it. Yet *Capital* provides him with yet a further distinction between Marx and Hegel. It is commonly believed that Marx "historicized" the immutable categories of classical economy. This belief originated in Marx's text and was strongly encouraged by Engels' famous statement in the preface to *Capital* III that Marx develops rather than defines. Or, as he writes in his *Anti-Dühring*: "The only *real* definition is the *development* of the thing itself." According to Althusser Marx did nothing of the sort and if he had done it he would have fallen under his own condemnation of historical ideologies. Indeed, our author claims, Marx's concept of history has nothing in common with Hegel's. For Marx was a structuralist *avant la lettre* for whom each social complex projects itself in a number of logical structures all relatively independent of one another. To be sure, ultimately they all depend upon the dominant structure of the whole—the economic one—but this dominance appears only *in the last instance*.

Unfortunately the method by which Althusser proves these interesting theses is not beyond criticism. In view of Marx's incomplete awareness of the novelty of his own achievement Althusser feels justified to state as Marx's thought what Marx *should have said* if he had drawn his own conclusions. Frequently Althusser comes up with some indications to support his reading, but more often Marx remains "silent," or even says the exact opposite of what Althusser decides he should have said. In the last case our interpreter dismisses Marx's words as an answer for which there was no proper question. It is hard not to feel a certain arbitrariness in such a procedure. Althusser's decisions what the true meaning *ought* to be invariably agree with the philosophical trend *en vogue* in Paris at the time of his writing: structuralism. For all its sophistication intellectual life in France is somewhat incestuous. French philosophers tend to write about one another whatever the topic at hand happens to be. Thus a reading of *Capital* develops into a discussion of structuralist philosophy. I doubt very much whether Althusser's structuralist attacks upon historical "interpretations" of Marx would have been acceptable to Marx himself, assuming he understood them.

Nor is Althusser's main textual support for the structuralist thesis likely to enhance Marx's philosophical status. To prove the independence of logical structures Althusser selects those texts in

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which Marx most strongly emphasizes the distinction between the logical and the real order. He opposes them to what he calls the "empiricist" concept of knowledge (which unites such strange bedfellows as Locke, Hegel and Condillac). The "empiricist" conceives knowledge "as a real part of the real object, in the real structure of the real object," while for Marx the real object survives in its independence "outside the head." From those dubious premises Althusser concludes that the production of knowledge takes place "entirely in thought," just as economic production occurs exclusively in the economic realm. If this meant that processes of thought enjoy a certain independence with respect to other (e.g., economic) processes (a thesis which mainly Marxists have denied) one could not but heartily applaud. But Althusser concludes from it to a new psycho-physical parallelism in the style of Spinoza.

Yet what according to Althusser is Marx's first principle, the primacy of the ideal over the real, excludes the status of equality and total independence which Spinoza's attribute of thought enjoys with respect to that of extension. There is nothing left in Marx, then, to guarantee the truth of a theory beyond a real relation to, and indeed dependence upon, the real world. More generally. I doubt whether one makes Marx more intelligible by reading him through the philosophy of Spinoza which he ignored, rather than through that of Hegel to which he paid constant tribute.

To emphasize the difference between Marx's and Hegel's dialectic is all well and good, provided one has another principle to prevent the dialectic from degenerating into a purely empirical description. Yet after having dismissed Hegel's dialectic as inadequate for the understanding of Marx's method Althusser fails to come up with a valid substitute. What is Marx's dialectical method if it is not essentially Hegelian as Marx himself claimed it to be? Dialectic is essentially a logical structure by which one understands the real. To reject, then, any relation between idea and reality as a mere remnant of idealism, is to withdraw the last support of dialectical necessity and to reduce Marxist philosophy to descriptive sociology.

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Ancestors

WILLIAM MAXWELL

Knopf, $6.95

FRANCIS J. BARRY

Mr. Maxwell's first full-length work of nonfiction is a combination of family chronicle, social and religious history, and spiritual autobiography. This new development in his art should come as no surprise to Maxwell enthusiasts, who have long been accustomed to a different kind of book from him each time out. Yet they should have little trouble placing *Ancestors*, since it is informed by the same strong, unsentimental feeling for the past as is much of his fiction. It has much in common with those archaeological expeditions which uncovered pre-World War I Lincoln, Illinois (*Time Will Darken It*); a Lincoln household visited by the angel of death (*They Came Like Swallows*); the aftermath of that catastrophe (*The Folded Leaf*).

Ancestors embodies a tremendous amount of research (not all of it by the author), and exhibits an awesome power of organization and synthesis on his part. In its quiet pages we meet scores of reborn men and women, including the author's parents, William Keepers Maxwell (1878-1958) and the former Blossom Blinn (1881-1919); his paternal grandparents, Robert Maxwell and Margaret Turley; his maternal grandparents, Edward Blinn and Annette Youtsey; and such American forefathers of his as Henry Maxwell (a young Scotchman who settled in Pennsylvania around 1740, and later married his cousin, Agnes Carson) and Charles Blinn (a native of Vermont who married Leefee Harrington, the great-granddaughter of Jonathan Harrington, the first man killed in the American Revolution).

A book such as this could have been a tedious collection of epitaphs, or else a kind of hymn to America's mythic past. *Ancestors* is neither. In writing about the pioneers who streamed from Vermont and Pennsylvania and Virginia and Kentucky into Ohio and Illinois, Maxwell knows how to revivify the dead without enshrining them. (A realist, he readily admits the relative social unimportance of most of his forebears.) It is often done by a combination of panorama, scene and philosophical commentary. Here, for example, is his reconstruction and interpretation of life on the Illinois frontier:

> Stephen England continued to call the settlers together and preach to them. When the benches and stools were all taken and there was no longer even a place to stand, the women would take their shoes off and get up on the beds. . . . As my great-great-great grandfather warmed to his subject he would pull his coat off. Sometimes there were Indians present. What they made out of the service is rather hard to imagine. The Bible presented no difficulties. It was right there in front of them, and the medicine man made magic with it. But the doctrine of saving faith? Baptism? . . . Atonement? . . . Was it perhaps simply that the Indians were by nature gregarious, and until they met with a sufficient amount of discouragement from the white men couldn't see a gathering of any kind without adding themselves to it?

Partly because Stephen England

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(Margaret Turley's maternal great-grandfather) and many of his descendants and their relatives by marriage were members of the Christian church (known also as the Disciples of Christ), about three-fifths of the first half of *Ancestors* is devoted to religious history: the sectarianism on the frontier, which caused thousands to turn from organized religion to emotional Christianity and private interpretation of the Bible; the Great Western Revival, which took place mostly in Kentucky and Tennessee from about 1800 to 1803; the consequent secession from Presbyterianism of England's friend, Barton Stone, who founded one branch of the Christian church (which later united with the Campbellites); England's carrying of its version of primitive Christianity into Sangamon County.

I must confess that the second half of *Ancestors*, in which Maxwell brings family history well up into the 20th century while telling us quite a bit about himself, interested me more than did the first half. He is often at his stylistic best in writing about his home town, the family characteristics and personal attributes of the Maxwells and Blinns, and his enchanted childhood (which came to an abrupt end with his mother's death in 1919). In his hands Lincoln—where people were allowed to be "eccentric" or "even dishonest" but not "openly immoral"—could never be mistaken for, say, Clyde, Ohio, or Sauk Center, Minnesota; nor could the ambiance of Aunt Maybel Maxwell's house, where the Christian church prevailed, be mistaken for that of Grandfather Blinn's or William Keeper Maxwell's homes, where the predominant religion was probably humanism (Maxwell's own faith today). His recollections and observations enable us to appreciate his indebtedness to the Blinn side of the family in particular for his personal code of behavior, and to both sides for his aesthetic sense. (Grandfather Maxwell—a lawyer by profession, as was Grandfather Blinn—once taught singing in a rural school; Grandmother Maxwell was an expert at appliquéing and crocheting. Maxwell's father—an insurance salesman who worked his way up to an executive position—was a good amateur musician. Maxwell's mother delighted in painting china.)

In one of his subtle, charming asides, Maxwell tells us that, when she was a little girl, his daughter Kate once dreamed of being "pursued by a snake crying 'Ancestors! Ancestors!'" While the young reader might have the same experience after closing this book, the mature should not. There is nothing terrifying or oppressive about this examination of the past. Maxwell has always been deeply aware of the importance of tradition, of roots, of the interrelationship of life and death (the subject of one of his best novels, *They Came Like Swallows*, and many of his recent fables). In an age so compartmentalized in its thinking as ours, it is comforting besides saddening to come upon his latest brisk exploration of one of his most important themes:

> It is not true that the dead desert the living. They go away for a very short time, and then they come back and stay as long as they are needed. But sooner or later a time comes when they are in the way; their presence is, for one reason or another, an embarrassment; there is no place for them in the lives of those they once meant everything to. Then they go away for good.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 243)

readers more than they are asking for, even more than they want.

If more Catholic publications were what they are supposed to be, if they were to start building community within the context of reality, if they were to be Marys as well as Marthas, and John the Evangelists as well as John the Baptists, I think our position might be a little more comfortable.

HENRY P. LIBERSAT, JR.
Managing Editor,
The Florida Catholic
Secretary, Catholic Press Association

St. Meinrad, Ind.

To the Editors: John Deedy's piece on the ailments of the Catholic press is an excellent diagnosis. We at *Marriage* concur heartily that we should throw away the crying towel and borrow the conglomerate technique of banding together and consolidating all our endeavors. One thing is certain: without effective modern communications, the church will soon become a distant blur on the horizon of history. Joint publishing efforts in the magazine and newspaper field and for books also should become the top order of the day. It may sound trite but it still is true that, unless we all hang together, we're liable to perish separately.

JOHN J. MCHALE
Editor, *Marriage*

For more on this topic, see page 242. —*Ed.*

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